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New York

President:	Mr. Adechi	(Benin)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Ms. Kawaguchi
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2005/69)

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05-24166 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2005/69)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela and Zambia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the debate without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Abe to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members have before them the report of the Secretary-General on small arms, document S/2005/69.

I now call on Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, to introduce the report.

Mr. Abe (*spoke in French*): I am honoured t to introduce the report of the Secretary-Genera small arms, contained in document S/2005/69.

Pursuant to the request made by the Preside the Security Council in his statement of 19 Jan 2004, this report provides an overview of the initia undertaken to further implement the recommenda contained in the report of the Secretary-Genera small arms of 20 September 2002 on ways and m by which the Security Council could contribut dealing with the question of the illicit trade in s arms and light weapons in situations under consideration. Those recommendations covered main topics: first, the implementation of Programme of Action on small arms and weapons; secondly, Security Council-mand sanctions and arms embargoes; thirdly, con prevention, peacebuilding and the demobilizat disarmament and reintegration of former combata and fourthly, confidence-building measures.

The present report was prepared by Department for Disarmament Affairs in c consultation with the Department of Peacekeep Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Un Nations Development Programme, the United Nati Children's Fund and the International Criminal Po Organization.

(*spoke in English*)

Much progress has been achieved in some areas, such as the efforts to enhance cooperation enable States to trace illicit small arms and l weapons; measures to increase the effectiveness sanctions; the adoption of more rigorous measu against violations of arms embargoes; control over export and transit of small arms and light weapo including international efforts to address the probl of illicit brokering in such weapons; and transparen in armaments.

The increasingly vigorous actions recently ta by the Security Council with respect to implementation of sanctions and arms embargoes particularly encouraging. The systematic establishm of monitoring mechanisms to support, monitor a assess the implementation of sanctions and to prov technical advice to the sanctions committees is important development. Equally noteworthy is adoption by the Council of measures to identify a

punish violators of arms embargoes as well as those who support such violations.

The greater attention being given by the Security Council to the specific needs of women and children and the receiving communities in the context of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants in post-conflict situations is also commendable. In that connection, also noteworthy is the demobilization of thousands of child soldiers in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The report also underscores that more needs to be done in a number of areas, namely the links between illicit small arms and light weapons and the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources; greater support for the reintegration of former combatants into their communities; greater interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly on the issue of small arms and light weapons; and support for the establishment of the Small Arms Advisory Service.

Today's open debate on small arms takes place in the wake of the second substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons, which was held recently at Headquarters in New York. That session considered a draft international instrument prepared on the basis of discussions held at the Working Group's first substantive session. Although the Open-ended Working Group seems to be moving closer to an agreement on a number of technical issues, it is still far from reaching a consensus on some important issues, particularly the nature of the international instrument. The challenge facing the Open-ended Working Group is to build a consensus on the various substantive issues by the end of its third session in June 2005. I trust that Member States will muster the political will necessary to bridge the differences and to bring that process to a positive outcome.

The Secretary-General is encouraged by the continued efforts of the Security Council to address the challenge posed by illicit small arms and light weapons in the context of matters under the Council's consideration. I am confident that this meeting will contribute to strengthening the achievements obtained thus far, as well as to identifying the best approaches to addressing the areas of continued concern.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in this Chamber.

On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister in charge of Foreign Affairs and former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Ms. Kawaguchi (Japan): At the outset, Sir, I wish to say how pleased I am to participate in this Council meeting today held under your presidency. I am privileged and truly grateful for the opportunity afforded me to express my Government's position on the issue of small arms and light weapons. I would also like to express my appreciation to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive introduction of the Secretary-General's report. This report, which effectively identified both the progress made in the area of small arms over a period of slightly more than a year and the challenges to be addressed in the future, will serve as a valuable guidepost for our future work.

The question of small arms and light weapons is a multidisciplinary issue in the sense that the widespread use of small arms not only results in a large number of casualties but also has a socio-economic dimension, insofar as it gives rise to other issues such as child soldiers and the disruption of recovery and development in post-conflict situations. In other words, this is an important area where the nexus of peace and development — which is the key underlying notion of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (*A/59/565*) — shows itself. That is why Japan has been attaching great importance to this issue. The General Assembly's annual resolutions on small arms and light weapons provide pragmatic prescriptions through which the international community seeks to solve the problems, and as a sponsor, along with Colombia and South Africa, we think it significant that the resolutions were adopted by consensus. The United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, both chaired by Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki, are another example of Japan's contributions to efforts in this area.

Let me focus on a few points that my Government considers to be important in addressing the issue of small arms and light weapons. I believe that they are closely related to the important elements in the report of the Secretary-General.

The guiding light in the United Nations process to tackle the small arms issue comes from the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in 2001. In order to help implement the Programme of Action, we have taken a number of actions, including the sponsoring of seminars and workshops in various places in regions such as Tokyo, Bali, Kazakhstan and Fiji. Another workshop is being planned for April of this year by Japan, China, Switzerland and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific as a regional initiative, by inviting countries from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Central Asia in order to support their national implementation of the Programme of Action.

Marking and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons is one of the most important tasks set out in the Programme of Action. As the Secretary-General's report points out, the Open-ended Working Group established by the General Assembly has made some progress, and Japan has made a number of constructive contributions to discussions there, especially as a non-exporter of weapons in principle. Japan will continue to do so to achieve a successful outcome at the Working Group.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process in post-conflict situations, the detailed updates of which are provided in the report, has become an important tool to ensure that a country in a post-conflict situation does not backslide into a state of conflict. While progress has been made in a number of areas, the report reminds us that there are many more challenges to overcome.

In order to help make progress in DDR, Japan has been taking concrete actions. For instance, in Afghanistan, a country afflicted by the protracted internal conflicts, the implementation of DDR is imperative to attain sustainable peace and security. With this perspective in mind, Japan, as a lead nation in the area of DDR in Afghanistan, has been assisting the DDR process by providing vocational training for ex-soldiers to facilitate their reintegration through dispatchin experts and by implementing reintegration projects at th grass-roots level. Japan has also been involved in simil projects in Africa; in Liberia and the Democrat Republic of Congo, we are cooperating with Unite Nations organizations involved with DDR projects.

Behind these actions is the idea of th consolidation of peace that I promoted as one of th pillars of Japan's foreign policy during my tenure a Foreign Minister of Japan, which ended not long ago The idea is to provide the necessary assistance fo countries in post-conflict situations to make a smoot transition towards nation-building. I am confident tha those efforts are gradually bearing fruit.

This idea of consolidating peace is in line wit the High-level Panel's key notion that in today' globalized world, international peace and security issues are closely linked to international developmen problems. From this viewpoint, we will continue t provide assistance on the ground to countries affecte by the scourge of small arms. Collection and destruction of illicit small arms and light weapons, capacity-building in the development of appropriate legislation and regulations and import and export control are the areas where cooperation from the international community is especially needed. With this in mind, Japan has been conducting a Weapons-for-Development project in Cambodia for the past two years, funded by Grant Aid for Peace-Building Assistance in the amount of over $8 million. We are now studying the possibility of cooperating further with some African countries, utilizing, among others, the Small Arms Trust Fund that Japan has established under the United Nations Global and Regional Disarmament Trust Fund.

In June 2006, the United Nations Review Conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action will be convened. Through our efforts towards that review meeting, I hope there will be good progress in the area of small arms and light weapons to be reported in the Secretary-General's report next year. We reaffirm our commitment to cooperate with the United Nations in implementing the Programme of Action, and, as a nation dedicated to world peace and stability, we are determined to intensify our efforts to address the issue of small arms and light weapons.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Kawaguchi for her kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Holliday (United States of America): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for organizing today's meeting on this important issue of small arms and light weapons. I would also like to thank Ambassador Oshima of Japan for his effort in drafting the presidential statement we will adopt later today and to welcome Ms. Kawaguchi. Of course, thanks to Under-Secretary-General Abe for his comments on the report of the Secretary-General.

With the words from recent debates on how to address the effects of conflicts around the world still echoing in this Chamber, we are faced with the reality that the instruments used to carry out such conflicts — particularly small arms and light weapons — continue to require our immediate and undivided attention. The destabilizing accumulation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons has proved a major obstacle to peace, to economic development and to efforts to rebuild war-torn societies. Terrorists groups, insurgents and drug traffickers continue to acquire arms primarily through illegal diversion, theft and smuggling, rather than through legitimate transfers.

The United States believes that small steps by individual countries and collective steps by regional and subregional organizations will go a long way towards establishing the norms and practices that will diminish the illicit proliferation of these weapons. Only two weeks ago, Member States, including the United States, gathered at the United Nations for the second session of the Open-ended Working Group to discuss a draft international instrument for the timely and reliable identification and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons. This was done under the able stewardship of Ambassador Anton Thalmann of Switzerland. The United States believes that such an instrument should be practical and effective, enabling the timely and reliable identification and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons, and should not interfere with already existing commitments in other forums. We look forward to the final two-week session and to the conclusion of negotiations in June.

With July's Biennial Meeting of States and the 2006 review conference of the United Nations Programme of Action before us, we have the opportunity to pursue and implement innovative and effective ways to assist those States in need of technical or financial assistance to implement the provisions to which we all agreed in the 2001 Programme of Action.

The United States welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of his recommendations to the Council (S/2005/69). In his report, the Secretary-General outlined several areas for Member States to consider in attempting to reduce the illicit proliferation of these weapons. We believe that large dividends in threat reduction can be achieved with a relatively modest investment. We welcome the Secretary-General's attention to the destruction of these weapons and to selected improvements to storage facilities, particularly within disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and peacekeeping operations. We also urge States to focus on these activities in connection with their own surplus and obsolete weapons. Such preventive activities are relatively inexpensive and can generally be accomplished using locally available infrastructure and personnel.

With a more focused approach to mitigate the threat posed by the proliferation of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADs) to undesirable end-users, the United States has expanded its assistance programme to safeguard and eliminate those dangerous weapons. Since the inception of our small-arms and light-weapons destruction programme, we have provided assistance for the destruction of over 700,000 small arms and light weapons and disabled over 10,000 MANPADs, in addition to over 75 million rounds of ammunition, in 15 countries.

In addition to these bilateral efforts, we continue to actively participate in regional and international efforts, such as those of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Wassenaar Arrangement and other forums.

Effective export and import controls and their enforcement are, as the Secretary-General highlighted in his report, the keystone to any successful effort to mitigate the problems of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Unfortunately, in many countries few, if any, laws exist to regulate the import and export of these weapons. In places where such laws exist, enforcement is often weak. Any export-control system should contain reliable and meaningful mechanisms for the licensing of the production and transfer of small arms and light weapons. Countries should exercise due diligence in authenticating end-user certificates to ensure that exported arms are destined for legitimate end-users. In addition, purchasing countries should

make sure that their import system is transparent and should provide maximum cooperation with the officials of exporting countries in certifying legitimate shipments. Unregulated arms brokers and inadequate enforcement of arms embargoes imposed by Council resolutions are additional causes of weapons getting to the black market.

Ultimately, a simple one-size-fits-all solution is unlikely to be effective in dealing with this complex problem. Given the close links between terrorism and organized crime, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has the potential to affect any country in the world at any time; the threat is not limited solely to regions of conflict, instability or poverty. Focused efforts to identify and curb the sources and methods of the illicit trade through robust export controls, law enforcement measures and efforts to expeditiously destroy excess stocks and safeguard Government stocks from theft are among the best ways to attack the problem.

In conclusion, the United States will continue to offer its assistance for small-arms and light-weapons destruction and stockpile management and security, export controls and law-enforcement training. We encourage other States that are in a position to do so to render financial and technical assistance to further our mutual goal to reduce the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons and to reduce the danger that these pose to our citizens, peacekeeping forces and soldiers around the world.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation, for having organized this important debate. We are grateful also to Under-Secretary-General Abe for his briefing. I would particularly like to welcome Ms. Kawaguchi and to thank her for her thoughtful and detailed remarks.

The United Kingdom supports the views to be expressed later in this debate by the representative of Luxembourg, which holds the presidency of the European Union. I will therefore cover only a few points.

The United Kingdom supports the full implementation at national, regional and international levels of the United Nations Programme of Action. We welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2005/69) and this debate as an opportunity to discuss and make progress on these important issues.

In particular, we welcome the support that w hope and expect will be expressed in the presidenti statement to be adopted later today on the need fi more responsibility in the management of small arm and light weapons transfers. I would like to thank th Japanese delegation for leading our work on th presidential statement. The availability of small arm and light weapons is so widespread that restraint b traditional suppliers, although absolutely necessary, not sufficient. We think that a broader internation approach is needed. The United Nations Programme o Action contains important guidance on controllin transfers, and we need to build on that. For exampl we need to identify common factors for considerati before issuing a licence for an international transfer o small arms and light weapons. We also need to suppo regions and countries concerned with their capacity building.

Our objective is to introduce minimum commo international controls on small arms and light weapon transfers within the United Nations Programme o Action at the United Nations review meeting on sma arms in 2006. We think that there are signs that a increasing number of countries support the need fo improved transfer controls. Certainly, an agreement o reducing illicit transfers would be a majo achievement. In the longer term, we are also workin with partner Governments in support of a international arms trade treaty. That would be a vita tool, extending the international rule of law o conventional arms.

The United Kingdom supports efforts in th Open-ended Working Group to negotiate a international instrument to enable States to identify an trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timel and reliable manner. The European Union as a whol supports the idea of a legally binding instrument tha also includes small arms and light weapon ammunition. We share Under-Secretary-General Abe' hope that the Group's work will conclude positively a its third and final session, this June. The Unite Kingdom supports the establishment of a group o governmental experts to consider further steps t enhance international cooperation in preventing combating and eradicating illicit brokering.

The United Kingdom also supports the expande scope of the United Nations Register of Conventiona Arms as a global transparency measure. We welcom the inclusion of man-portable air defence system

(MANPADs) and light artillery within the scope of the Register, as well as the voluntary reporting of small arms and light weapons transfers.

The significant threat posed by MANPADs has been acknowledged globally; measures to prevent their diversion must be strengthened. The United Kingdom therefore regrets that the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts was unable to reach consensus on the inclusion of small arms and light weapons within the scope of the Register. We hope that that will be possible in the next review.

We encourage all Member States to include transfers of small arms and light weapons as part of the additional background information in their reports. Only through full transparency in the global trade in small arms and light weapons can we really fully address the problem of their diversion into the illicit market. The United Nations Register is a unique confidence-building measure in the field of conventional arms, and the United Kingdom would like to use this debate to encourage participation by all Member States.

The United Nations Programme of Action commits Member States to national, regional and international measures to control small arms and light weapons. The 2003 Biennial Meeting showed that much remains to be done to implement those commitments. The United Kingdom calls on States to help those countries affected by armed violence to build their capacity to control small-arms transfers. That can be done through the transfers control initiative that we are proposing and funding. As Japan has already underlined in this debate, such assistance is most effective when conducted within development partnerships aligned with broader development goals. Our common aim for the 2005 Biennial Meeting must be significant progress in international efforts to tackle this problem, which is at the heart of so many conflicts today.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me at the outset, Mr. President, to express my appreciation for your country's interest in holding this open debate on the issue of small arms, which affect the daily lives of millions of persons. Permit me also to thank, through you, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his detailed presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/69), and to congratulate Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi on her excellent statement.

The issue of small arms is a complex problem, given its dimensions of public safety, armed conflict and humanitarian issues, depending on the region or subregion concerned. The very nature of the problems caused by small arms thus requires a coordinated and complementary focus among the various organs of the system. That is why, when we were discussing the presidential statement to be adopted at the end of this debate, Argentina made sure that the focus was on two areas of the Security Council's primary competence: arms embargoes and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

With regard to arms embargoes, we fully support recommendations 5 and 9 of the Secretary-General's report: to encourage Member States to enforce all Council resolutions on sanctions, including those imposing arms embargoes, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and to adopt national legislation in that regard, including the use of end-user certificates.

Concerning the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, that process is of unquestionable importance as an essential component of peacekeeping operations if we are to avoid the recurrence of armed conflict. Our own experience in many peacekeeping operations has convinced us of the need to address the economic and social aspects of the process if we truly intend to eradicate the underlying causes of conflicts.

As regards the Council's competence in the area of small arms, we cannot fail to mention the risk represented by the diversion of such arms — particularly man-portable air defence systems — to terrorist groups. In that connection, we note with satisfaction the decision to broaden the scope of the Register of Conventional Arms as a measure to promote transparency and confidence throughout the world. We encourage weapons-exporting countries to be as responsible as possible in their transactions and to prevent the flow of arms and munitions to areas of instability.

This open debate is an excellent opportunity for the Council to support and encourage the work of the General Assembly aimed at implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Argentina is committed to the full implementation of the Programme and is

participating, together with our partners in the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and associated States, in the Open-ended Working Group charged with negotiating an instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. We hope that that instrument will be legally binding and that it will cover illicit ammunition. The Biennial Meeting on the Programme of Action to be held next June will be a decisive step in preparing for the 2006 review conference, and we are fully committed to ensuring the success of both meetings.

Finally, another step in the right direction would be to establish a group of governmental experts to strengthen cooperation in preventing, combating and eliminating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): Romania fully associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I would like to make some specific comments on the topic under consideration today, but not before commending the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2005/69), whose recommendations we support. We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Nobuyasu Abe for his valuable introduction of that important document. A special word of appreciation goes to the delegation of Japan for its work on the presidential statement and for its overall engagement in support of our debate today.

We have all come to the point where we realize that the question of small arms involves not only disarmament, but also development, democracy, human rights and human security. We all are aware that the illicit trafficking and uncontrolled flow of small arms and light weapons are sources of instability. The proliferation of such weapons has exacerbated conflict, caused refugee flows and spawned a culture of violence and impunity. Often, they pay for civil wars, which in turn produce severe economic and social consequences. In almost all the conflicts that took place in the past decade, ranging from the Great Lakes region in Africa to the Balkans and to Central and South Asia, the weapons used by the various parties have been mainly small and light weapons.

The humanitarian implications of small arms have alerted the international community to the urgency of curbing their illicit trafficking, thus reducing violence and the risk of civil wars. Their availability to parties may impact on the willingness of those parties to negotiate peaceful solutions and may limit the capacity of States and international or regional organizations to engage in conflict-prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

Small arms are also used by terrorists and criminal groups. The illicit trade in small arms becomes a threat not only to countries torn by internal conflict, but also to States that are free from instability but are routes of transit or trans-shipment for illegal transactions.

On the other hand, countries retain the legitimate right to self-defence in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Arms production and transfers for that purpose are licit. Legality of arms trading entails the conduct of transfers in an even more responsible manner. The arms industry must be carefully controlled by government policy and regulations, and clear and strict criteria on arms exports should be implemented.

There are no simple solutions, however, and no single method for dealing with the impact of the illicit small arms trade. Political commitments can make a critical difference in conflict-affected countries and regions.

In recent years, more States have committed themselves to abide by and implement regional and international standards to strengthen export controls to prevent illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The United Nations Programme of Action, the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted in 2000 by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports are thus the most relevant standards in our region. Effective implementation of such commitments is indeed a complex and challenging task, which requires political will and adequate resources. It also requires a great deal of cooperation in order to identify and develop a common understanding of procedures, standards and mechanisms to enforce controls.

Most countries have already in place laws and regulations that are used to control production, use and transfer of small arms and light weapons. However, in some countries existing laws appear to be inadequate, or control procedures vulnerable to misuse.

Romania's policy on small arms will continue to be focused on combating illicit trafficking, on pursuing a responsible and transparent policy on legal transfers, and on promoting the removal and continued destruction of surpluses. In implementing its commitments under the Programme of Action, Romania started in early 2002 a programme of destruction of its small arms and light weapons.

Romania, which is also concerned with challenges related to small arms and light weapons in its own neighbourhood, stands ready to share its experience with all interested countries and to assist other States in establishing and developing sound export control systems.

Most weapons start out their lives legally. States have to focus on regulating the legal production of, and trade in, small arms and light weapons, starting at the national level. Governments need to tighten legislation and regulations governing production and trade, in particular on marking and tracing, and then invest significant resources in implementation. We also need greater recognition that domestic laws and international policies are interdependent and that each country's relevant national laws have an impact on neighbours and even on countries in other regions.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/69), significant progress has been achieved so far at the global, regional and national levels. Yet many issues related to small arms and light weapons are still to be discussed and agreed upon with a view to formulating and enforcing international norms and regulations in this field.

Further concrete measures should be undertaken in several directions, such as better coordination between various programmes managed by the United Nations and those run by regional and subregional organizations, in particular on issues such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and illicit trafficking; the establishment of national points of contact for information-sharing and cooperation, in particular for the implementation of relevant decisions adopted by the Security Council; and the improvement of public awareness and transparency by enhancing cooperation between Governments and industry and by publishing annual reports on arms transfers.

The Security Council has a major role to play in making small arms a focus of global attention and action. It could add value by improving the effectiveness of its arms embargoes, by putting an end to the economy of war, by encouraging moratoriums on arms sales to conflict regions and by adopting comprehensive regional approaches to DDR programmes. The minimal requirement for Governments to report to the United Nations on their small arms activities, including on man-portable air defence systems, must also be taken into consideration.

Finally, weapons management, and in particular the control of civilian possession of small arms and light weapons in post-conflict countries, is central to longer term human security. This will be effective only if it takes place within the framework of comprehensive programmes of security reform, subject to the authority of representative civilian Governments.

Those are only a few — but important — elements that I believe we need to address in our future undertakings as well.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): The delegation of Brazil wishes to express its appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the initiative of convening this debate on the issue of small arms. We also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for presenting the Secretary-General's report (S/2005/69) on ways and means in which the Security Council can contribute to dealing with the question of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in interaction with the General Assembly.

The issue of the uncontrolled traffic in such weapons has become a matter of great concern for the international community due to the tragic consequences of arms availability in terms of making local conflicts more lethal and of generating a sense of insecurity in civil society.

The subject of small arms, whether in the context of disarmament, national security and public security or from a humanitarian perspective, must be permanently discussed in all relevant forums. The solution to this problem requires the commitment of all States and the assistance of civil society, along with the input of international, regional and subregional organizations.

The Secretary-General's report recognizes some progress made on his recommendations within the competence of the General Assembly since our last debate on small arms, at our 4896th meeting, one year

ago. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade and Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is the reference that regulates United Nations activities in this field. The delegation of Brazil expects that the consideration of its implementation at the Second Biennial Meeting of States, to be held next July, will contribute to the good results of the 2006 review conference on the Programme of Action.

For that reason, the step taken by the General Assembly towards constituting an Open-Ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons is crucial. The Working Group has put great efforts into its endeavour. We expect that the document to be produced at its third session will be legally binding and responsive to the urgent necessity of interrupting the illegal flow of such weapons. Our next step should be to consider how to improve international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.

The delegation of Brazil is very pleased with the reaction of Member States to the recommendation in favour of greater participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and in the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures. This enhanced participation continues to be required, as it generates transparency and stronger confidence among countries.

There have been important developments at the regional and subregional levels as well. Brazil strongly supports all the efforts that have been deployed by the Organization of American States to curb the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, such as those related to the implementation of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, and of the model regulations of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission.

Unfortunately, despite the national efforts made, there are still loopholes in the regime governing the legal transfer of arms that allow for the diversion of arms to the illegal market. Brazil stands as an example of such efforts, having adapted its legislation to current necessities. Last year, President Lula sanctioned the innovative Disarmament Statute, which restricts the bearing, possession and commerce of arms, in addition to criminalizing international arms trafficking. Brazil has also adopted a national arms system as a measure of preventive control. Aside from the strengthening of legislative measures, we also regularly exchange information with our neighbours and have established border procedures. With its partners in MERCOSUR, Brazil is developing a network of activities that are progressively strengthening cooperation among its members. However, despite all these national, subregional and regional initiatives, we still have not solved the problem. With reference to the recommendations of the Secretary-General that fall within the Security Council's purview, our delegation would like to highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. We fully support the Secretary-General's concern with the social and economic aspects of post-conflict situations. It is crucial for the accomplishment of a peacekeeping operation's mission that provision be made for technical, financial and logistical support for the reintegration phase.

Much more remains to be done. May this broad exchange of opinions constitute further evidence that all United Nations Members are renewing their commitment to work together and to contribute to our common efforts towards eradicating the illegal flow of small arms.

Finally, we join members in thanking the delegation of Japan, through Ms. Kawaguchi, for the preparation and presentation of the draft presidential statement.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish at the outset to thank Mr. Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for presenting the report of the Secretary-General. We recognize the presence of Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi in our midst today in the Council.

Tanzania acknowledges and welcomes the increasing systemwide recognition by the United Nations of the dangers posed by small arms to regional and international peace and security. The measures which have been taken so far by the Security Council to address the problem of small arms are encouraging.

National security, as well as law and order, in many African countries, including Tanzania, has been adversely affected by the easy availability of small

arms and light weapons due to many factors, including porous borders, recurrent subregional conflicts, the presence of armed elements among refugees and illicit international trade in these weapons. For decades, small arms have spread uncontrolled, with devastating consequences for human security in Africa.

Small arms are the weapons of choice in most conventional conflicts and insurgencies. They claim thousands of lives and cause injuries around the globe every year, the majority of the victims being civilians, especially women and children. These weapons fuel, intensify and prolong conflicts, frustrate peace initiatives and destabilize regimes emerging from conflict. Small arms and dual-use instruments such as machetes in the hands of undemocratic regimes and insurgent non-State actors have been responsible for some of the most gross human rights violations, genocides, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Africa. As we know all too well, today car bombs and dynamite sticks are among the deadliest weapons in the arsenals of terrorists and international terrorism. The control of the spread of small arms and light weapons should therefore be one of the major preoccupations of the Security Council in discharging its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The ease with which small arms and light weapons are obtained is an obstacle to peace efforts and must be addressed systematically and comprehensively as part of the disarmament responsibilities of the United Nations system as a whole. We welcome the establishment of a small arms advisory service within the Department of Disarmament Affairs.

While the steps that have been taken so far in the realm of small arms control are commendable, there is still a need for greater support from a number of actors and stakeholders, such as the media; for the participation of non-governmental organizations; and for the involvement of human rights activists, religious bodies and other advocacy groups. Such initiatives should be coordinated with related development strategies and goals.

We strongly recommend the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action adopted by the July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. Tanzania welcomes and encourages the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group established by the General Assembly in December 2003 to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. That initiative requires greater political impetus on the part of exporting and importing countries alike to move it forward. The Secretary-General's initiative to establish a group of experts to consider this issue is most welcome and should be encouraged.

The linkage between illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the illicit exploitation of resources should be clearly understood, with a view to discouraging and stopping it. The scant attention given to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes in post-conflict situations is a major cause of the circulation of arms as currency and a means of exchange and livelihood by ex-combatants. It is one of the major sources of illicit arms circulation and political instability following peace agreements and the peacebuilding phase of post-conflict situations.

Most of the conflict-ridden areas, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, are major recipients of small arms. States in those areas should be encouraged to come up with legislation on marking and end-user certificates. They should also exercise restraint in military expenditures and focus on transparency in weapon registrations, including through credible national arms registers.

We encourage initiatives like that of Japan for grant aid for peacebuilding assistance established under the United Nations Global and Regional Disarmament Trust Fund, which can be used for development.

In collaboration with the General Assembly and the Security Council, we could begin to build a culture of tolerance which would enable people to own weapons for their legitimate security interests without necessarily utilizing them for criminal purposes or for disrupting the peace.

Finally, efforts aimed at collecting and destroying small arms and light weapons associated with criminal activities such as drug trafficking and serious breaches of law and order, nationally and regionally, should be encouraged and financed.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Mr. Abe for having introduced the report of the Secretary-General on small

arms. The conclusions and recommendations in the report confirm that the United Nations must, and indeed is, playing a lead role in the implementation of a comprehensive approach in this area. The Russian Federation has spoken out consistently in favour of enhancing the Organization's coordinating role in tackling the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Preventing the illegal spread of those weapons is becoming particularly urgent in the context of counter-terrorism and dealing with the consequences of armed conflict.

A number of important events have recently taken place that prove that the international community has great capacity to combat the illicit trafficking in small arms. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions adopted in December 2003 and December 2004 on the illicit trafficking in all its aspects, there were two meetings of the Open-ended Working Group that is developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner. The draft instrument on that matter quite rightly emphasizes such key areas as weapons-marking, record-keeping and increasing international cooperation in that area. The creation of a comprehensive monitoring mechanism should provide an effective barrier to the illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons throughout the world.

We attach great importance to the second meeting of States planned for July 2005 to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the United Nations Programme on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We believe that event will make it possible to take stock of the implementation by States of the Programme of Action and to highlight existing problems on the eve of the 2006 United Nations conference to review the progress made in implementation of the Programme of Action. We are convinced that the bulk of the work in this area should continue to be done in the format indicated.

The Security Council has on several occasions discussed the problem of the illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons as it relates to conflict situations on the Council's agenda. The Council's comprehensive discussion in January 2005 was very useful and timely with regard to resolving complex problems related to maintaining and restoring international peace and security in Africa, particularly in West Africa.

The Russian Federation favours the adoption of decisive and effective steps in cases in which weapons are delivered to illegal armed groups. The experience gained in the implementation of embargoes on the transfer of arms to zones of conflict confirms the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Security Council. However, a top priority continues to be the monitoring of compliance with the Council's bans on the delivery of weapons and the enhancement of the effectiveness of monitoring mechanism to investigate cases of embargo violations.

In the context of peacekeeping operations under the aegis of the United Nations — and this is a point referred to in the Secretary-General's report — greater attention has recently been given to the subject of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, including with regard to the mandates for peacekeeping operations and, in close cooperation with parties to a conflict, the collection of illegal small arms and light weapons and disrupting their distribution. The support of donors for DDR programmes is an important element in the success of such programmes.

Experience in the area of resolving conflict situations convincingly shows that there is a direct link between the illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons and the activities of illegal armed groups, the involvement of child soldiers in conflict, massive violations of human rights and the rules of international humanitarian law, and transborder crime. The need to prevent small arms and light weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists is becoming increasingly clear, in particular with regard to the most dangerous types of small arms and light weapons.

We believe it important to continue to pay special attention to specific and feasible measures to combat the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons at both the prevention stage and during the post-conflict phase. Accordingly, the experience of regional organizations is both very timely and useful.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to the representative of Japan for his preparation of the draft presidential statement that we will adopt later today.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting on the very serious subject of small arms and

light weapons. The mere fact that the Council is seized with the subject for the fifth time proves its relevance.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on small arms. We would very much like to thank Under-Secretary-General Abe for the clarity of his presentation. We also welcome Ms. Kawaguchi. I would also like to thank my Japanese colleagues for their careful preparation of the draft presidential statement that the Council will adopt at this meeting.

We associate ourselves with the statement to be made shortly by Ambassador Jean-Marc Hoscheit, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg, on behalf of the European Union. I would nevertheless like to make the following points.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has contributed to their unlimited proliferation. Several million small arms and light weapons are illegally possessed by either transnational crime organizations or non-State actors.

It is estimated that the victims of small arms and light weapons total 500,000 annually, a large proportion of them being children and civilians. Most affected by this modern scourge are developing countries. In order to contain this modern plague on humankind, in 2001 the United Nations adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Its implementation is of paramount importance.

The first Biennial Meeting of Member States on the Implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons was held in July 2003 to exchange experiences. The second such meeting will be convened in July 2005, and a review conference is planned for the following year. We hope that this ongoing effort will lead to a positive outcome.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/241, an open-ended working group was established in order to negotiate an instrument on marking and tracing. The group made considerable progress in its first two sessions, although some substantial issues are still open. Greece hopes that all pending issues will be resolved during the next meeting. A new legally binding instrument on marking and tracing will greatly facilitate the eradication of small arms and light weapons.

Another means to combat the illicit trade is the adoption of end-user certificates. Both the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have relevant provisions in place that emphasize the implementation of that plan. End-user certificates will help to discover whether arms destined for legal uses have been diverted to illegal recipients, thereby limiting the flow of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized or undesired users. If such a measure is universalized, it will contribute greatly to our legal arsenal in the fight to eradicate the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons.

In accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, all countries have an inherent right to self-defence. The armed forces and police of States therefore need small arms and light weapons. One can nevertheless not overlook the fact that, in some instances, small arms and light weapons that start out legally ultimately arrive at illegal destinations. That loophole has to be effectively addressed through severe measures in the national legislation of all countries.

Given that small arms are inoperable without ammunition, the flow of ammunition for small arms and light weapons must also be brought under control. My country has actively participated in the programme to destroy excessive ammunition in Albania.

We support the view that the Security Council, in its consideration of peacekeeping operations, always has the duty to introduce a component dealing with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants into their local societies. That is a measure of paramount importance. If it is well implemented, it will enhance stability in conflict-torn countries.

Measures also have to be taken to ensure strict compliance with United Nations embargoes and sanctions in conflict areas. The Council should spare no effort to stop the proliferation of small arms and light weapons or to identify potential links between the illicit trade in those weapons and the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources. Zero tolerance for smugglers has to be the rule. Countries also have to exert some restraint when they are exporting to conflict areas, even when an arms embargo has not yet been imposed.

Last but not least, the Council should urge all Member States fully and effectively to implement all recommendations of the Secretary-General, who should also be requested to produce a further update on the matter when the Council is next seized with the question of small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Sir, for arranging this meeting, which gives us the opportunity to exchange views on the issue of small arms and light weapons.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his recent report to the Security Council and Under-Secretary-General Abe for his introduction.

In recent years, small arms and light weapons have increasingly become the focus of international attention. The illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of such weapons have worsened armed conflicts in certain countries and regions and disrupted peace processes and the smooth operation of post-conflict reconstruction. They are also closely linked to terrorism, organized crime, the illicit exploitation of natural resources and child soldiers, causing political, economic and social damage.

National Governments shoulder the primary responsibilities in combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. The root cause of that problem can be removed only by reinforcing national legal systems and control mechanisms and by imposing strict controls on domestic production and trade in small arms and light weapons. At the same time, as small arms and light weapons have increasingly become a global issue, the appropriate solution to the problem cannot be sought without the joint efforts of the international community. All countries must undertake close cooperation at the national, regional and international levels; tighten supervision and control of the trade in small arms and light weapons; trace illicit trafficking networks; pool information; and provide the developing countries with the necessary financial and technical assistance.

International efforts on small arms and light weapons form a most active and productive component part of the current multilateral arms control endeavour. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, concluded in 2001, have established a policy and legal foundation for the settlement of small arms and light weapons issues, adding a new chapter to the international combat against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

The follow-up international efforts have enjoyed gratifying progress. Countries have attached great importance to the Programme of Action, earnestly implemented various measures and accumulated valuable experience. On that basis, the United Nations First Biennial Meeting on the implementation of the Programme of Action was held successfully in 2003, vigorously enhancing the Programme's comprehensive implementation. A wide spectrum of international and regional seminars on small arms and light weapons has also played an important role in increasing international consensus and expanding the exchange of information.

It is worth mentioning that, on the basis of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts established by the Secretary-General, the Open-ended Working Group on an international instrument for the timely and reliable identification and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons was set up last year and two sessions have been held. The parties involved have had an in-depth exchange of views on marking, record-keeping and international tracing cooperation and have reached wide consensus. We hope that the Working Group will conclude the new international instruments on schedule, which will contribute to a more effective strike against the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

In July this year, the United Nations Second Biennial Meeting on the implementation of the Programme of Action will be held, and the review conference will take place next year. We hope that, based on the previous work, the two important meetings will comprehensively review the implementation of the Programme of Action, exchange views, jointly seek solutions to difficulties and problems, and earnestly enhance national efforts to implement various measures embodied in the Programme step by step.

In recent years, the Security Council has often held special deliberations on the issue of small arms and light weapons, and emphasized the importance of that issue in seeking solutions to regional conflicts. In complement to the aforementioned international efforts, the Security Council should, within the scope of its mandate, continue to focus its attention on the

issue, earnestly monitor the implementation of the relevant arms embargoes, and include disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in peacekeeping operation authorizations. In addition, the Security Council should strengthen coordination with the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies in that regard to achieve complementarity.

China fully supports the efforts being made against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and has played an active part in the relevant international efforts. In recent years, China has earnestly implemented the Programme of Action and further improved its relevant legislations. China has already signed the Firearms Protocol and is now preparing to ratify and implement it, establishing a national database on the production and possession of and trade in small arms and light weapons, and optimizing its marking system.

China supports the United Nations in playing a lead role in international efforts to seek solutions to the small arms and light weapons issue. We have taken an active and constructive part in all the meetings of the United Nations group of governmental experts on small arms and light weapons, as well as the work of the current Open-ended Working Group on the new international instrument. In April this year, China, Japan and Switzerland, together with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, will jointly hold an international workshop on small arms and light weapons in Beijing to enhance the in-depth study of that issue, especially in Central and South-East Asia. China is ready to join with the rest of the international community in seeking an early and appropriate global solution to the issue of small arms and light weapons.

Before concluding, I should like to join my colleagues in expressing support for and thanking the Japanese delegation for drafting the presidential statement to be adopted today.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): I wish to thank you, Sir, for organizing this important debate on small arms. Indeed, as pointed out by the representative of Tanzania, the prevention of the proliferation of those arms is a key task of the Security Council in the discharge of its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We are also grateful to Under-Secretary-General Abe for his comprehensive briefing and introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the subject, and to the former Japanese Foreign Minister for her important statement in this debate.

A leading university has estimated that, in 2003, 639 million firearms were in circulation the world over, 80 per cent of which were purchased by civilians. Out of this number of civilian firearms, manufactured mainly in developed countries, 41 per cent, or over 200 million firearms, are illicit. In other words, there was a ratio of one illicit — uncontrolled, unlicensed, illegal or unauthorized — weapon to every 25 persons in the world. It would be interesting to know last year's statistics.

In large parts of the world, small arms and light weapons are weapons of mass destruction. The availability of small arms and light weapons stokes conflicts, causes a high number of casualties, complicates peacekeeping operations and hampers disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Thus, in 1994, the General Assembly adopted, for the first time, a resolution — resolution 48/75 F — recognizing the threat posed by small arms to national and regional security and their contribution to the destabilization of States.

Since that time, no regulatory regime to control the proliferation of illicit small arms has emerged. In the view of my delegation, the problem of small arms and light weapons is a global one requiring a comprehensive and coordinated response at the national, subregional and international levels. The problem goes beyond the military and disarmament domains; it has humanitarian as well as socio-economic consequences. There is need, therefore, for international cooperation, capacity-building and financial assistance to developing countries in addressing the problem. Also, weapons-exporting countries need to assume a greater degree of responsibility in their operations relative to small arms and light weapons.

My delegation endorses the negotiations on two important international instruments proposed under the United Nations Programme of Action dealing, respectively, with marking and tracing and with the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons. The successful and early conclusion of those two instruments is urgently needed for cohesion in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade

in small arms and light weapons. It will ensure that national legislation, as well as bilateral, subregional and regional arrangements, will be aligned or re-aligned accordingly. Unless such instruments are in force, disparate approaches at the national, subregional and regional levels will give the highly organized illegal traffickers and brokers ample room to carry out their trade with impunity.

Every effort should be made to conclude negotiations on the draft international instrument on marking and tracing by June 2005. The issue of whether or not the instrument should be legally binding should not be a wedge issue anymore, taking into account the fact that the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is already criminalized in many jurisdictions. In this context, the Philippines will endorse the recommendation of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change that

> "Member States should expedite and conclude negotiations on legally binding agreements on the marking and tracing, as well as the brokering and transfer, of small arms and light weapons". (*A/59/565, report, para. 96*)

It is cause for regret that negotiations on a draft international instrument on brokering have been pushed back to the second half of 2006.

The Philippines pointed out last year that the Security Council and the General Assembly are both seized of the issue of small arms. In that regard, my delegation reiterates its proposal for interaction between the Council and the Assembly to facilitate complementary action on the problem. We strongly support the convening this year of the first consultation and coordination between the Council and the Assembly to set into motion the much-needed interaction of the two United Nations organs most concerned with the subject of the illicit trade in small arms.

In conclusion, and as the former Foreign Minister of Japan said, the issue of small arms and light weapons is a multidisciplinary issue. We should continue to engage the assistance and cooperation of civil society, whose members look at this issue through the prism of humanitarian considerations. They can provide impetus for Governments to move forward and avoid unnecessary delay. My delegation's strong support for giving a role to civil society upholds the provision of the Programme of Action which encourages non-governmental organizations and civil society to engage, as appropriate, in all aspects of international, subregional and national efforts to implement the Programme.

We are, of course, grateful to the Japanese Mission for negotiating the draft presidential statement to be adopted at the end of today's meeting.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation would like to thank you for organizing this open debate on small arms. We welcome the attention given by the Security Council to this issue, which is particularly sensitive because of its implications for the maintenance of international peace and security. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2005/69) and Mr. Nobuyasu Abe for his excellent introduction to it.

The scope and complexity of the issue of illicit trafficking in small arms is more than ever before a challenge to the international community to take prompt, effective and bolder measures to curb this scourge. Combating this multidimensional phenomenon demands constant vigilance and effective action on the part of the international community. There can be no hesitation, and we cannot relent in our efforts. States that have primary responsibility for this task must take steps commensurate with the challenge, while at the same time fully respecting the right of each State to security, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

For the struggle to succeed, all Member States must be unambiguously committed to ending illicit trafficking in small arms and to cooperating fully at the bilateral, regional and international levels to dismantle networks of illegal arms brokers.

Tackling the causes of the problem clearly demands that producer countries demonstrate the highest level of responsibility in identifying the end-user when contracting arms sales.

The General Assembly is making a real contribution to mobilizing the international community against illicit trafficking in small arms. The United Nations Programme of Action on small arms, adopted in July 2001, is certainly an important step forward in combating this scourge, which feeds armed conflict, particularly in the African continent, and fuels terrorist networks and organized crime.

One of the advantages of the Programme is that it sets forth a number of norms and principles that must

become a benchmark for any undertaking in this area. The General Assembly's 23 December 2003 decision to establish an Open-ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument on identifying and tracing illicit small arms was a timely response to the international community's concerns on combating illegal movements of such arms.

Following open debates in August 2001 (see S/PV.4355), in October 2002 (see S/PV.4623) and in January 2004 (see S/PV.4896), the Security Council adopted three presidential statements containing recommendations that support efforts made in this area and that help to resolve the question of illicit trade in small arms in situations of which it is seized. Here, my delegation agrees with the recommendation in the report of the Secretary-General on the need for interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council — two principal organs of the Organization — so as to better understand the phenomenon and develop a long-term common strategy commensurate with the challenge.

In our view, we will not be able to curb the trafficking in small arms or to consolidate peace in conflict and post-conflict situations unless there is effective regional cooperation and international cooperation that mobilizes resources to help in collecting and destroying illegal small arms, within the context of programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

In this regard, Africa deserves the attention and support of the international community in its sustained effort and determination to combat resolutely the scourge of the illicit traffic in small arms, which is threatening Africa's stability and seriously jeopardizing its development efforts.

Commendable initiatives have been made at the level of the African continent — through, for example, the Bamako Declaration and the West African moratorium — which reflect Africa's unwavering support and its resolve to participate actively in international efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms.

In this context, Algeria, which is well aware of the need to ensure regional cooperation to combat the transborder movement of small arms in the African and Arab regions, has agreed to organize, with the support of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and interested countries, a regional meeting on this issue.

In conclusion, I would like to think the delegation of Japan for having coordinated the negotiations on the draft presidential statement, which my delegation fully supports.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's debate on small arms. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the issue (S/2005/69). I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Abe, for his useful comments, and Ms. Kawaguchi for her presence here in the Council.

I would like underline at the outset that Denmark associates itself with the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

The challenge that small arms and light weapons pose for us is complex. Those arms fuel underlying tensions, exacerbate conflicts and hamper peacebuilding efforts. The arms are an easy currency for smugglers, sanctions busters and terrorists, and are widely traded for illegally extracted natural resources. At the same time, in many parts of the world small arms are also the breadwinners and the primary means of protection for civilians struggling to survive in societies where the rule of the gun rather than the rule of law dominates.

This complex challenge must be tackled through a comprehensive approach that addresses both the supply side and the demand side of the equation. It should bring together a range of measures — security, legal, political and developmental — and engage a wide variety of actors, the Council being only one of them. I would like briefly to offer some views with respect to three areas of action.

First, Denmark fully supports the expeditious implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. We hope that the Biennial Meeting this year and the review conference in 2006 will further develop the Programme as a platform for advanced policies on small arms and light weapons.

The ongoing negotiations on marking and tracing small arms, light weapons and ammunition could be a major achievement in this regard, and we strongly believe that the international community should move

directly to the adoption of a legally binding international instrument.

Developing a tool to confront illicit brokering is the next step forward. The legal and illegal supply chains are closely interlinked. Often it is only at the last stage that a transaction becomes illegal. The development of a verifiable and credible end-user certificate system would be of critical value in further tackling illicit arms transfers.

Secondly, we would like to stress the need for the Council to continue to explore ways and means of using and enforcing its arms embargoes. We agree with the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the Council should move to use arms embargoes sooner rather than later, to try to prevent heightened political tension from turning into outright violent conflict. This will also often be a way of effectively breaking the link between the illegal exploitation of natural resources and illicit arms trafficking.

Establishing panels of experts has greatly enhanced the monitoring of arms embargoes, but the follow-up to the recommendations of the panels must be strengthened, for example, through stronger provisions for secondary sanctions on countries or individuals that violate sanctions regimes. We believe that the Council should stimulate further consideration of the role peacekeeping units and other relevant actors, including civil society, could usefully play in enforcing sanctions regimes. Again, attention should be directed at both ends of the chain of supply and demand. Arms embargoes work only if the necessary means to enforce them are in place and if everyone observes them painstakingly.

Thirdly, I would like to stress our particular concerns about the situation in Africa, where illicit arms transfers and the recirculation of weapons from one conflict to another constitute a mounting problem. Full use should be made of international and regional instruments to curb illicit arms flows and enforce arms embargoes in Africa. The challenge, however, can be tackled in the long run only by acknowledging the interlinkage between security and development. In order to break the vicious circle, it is necessary to address the root causes of why people procure arms: poverty, lack of legitimate employment opportunities, the failure of States to provide security, and civil strife.

That is why it is so crucially important to ensure funds for the rehabilitation and reintegration phase of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes. The Council should engage in consultations with relevant partners on new ways of securing the necessary resources to create possibilities for vocational training, education and real jobs, taking into account the special needs of child soldiers and women.

We should approach with an open mind the possibility of funding a larger share of DDR-related activities in peacekeeping operations through assessed contributions. But often the financial and human resources are already there: we just need to coordinate them better. Turf should be given up for the benefit of cooperation. In this regard, there is also a need to enhance regional cooperation and to harmonize DDR programmes across neighbouring countries. Further involving regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, is one way forward.

Last but not least, it is important not to forget the link to governance. For example, attempts at strengthening the rule of law and enforcement may enhance confidence in a country's legal system, which in turn may help to reduce the temptation to take the law into one's own hands.

It is clear that the Council is only one of a number of relevant actors needed to tackle the complex challenge of small arms and lights weapons. During its tenure, Denmark will strive to enhance the cooperation between the Council and other relevant agencies and organizations inside and outside the United Nations in this important endeavour. We believe that the security and development challenge posed by small arms underscores the importance of the current United Nations reform agenda, in particular the pertinence of the recommendation of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to establish a peacebuilding commission with the task of integrating security, political, social and economical aspects of peacebuilding.

Finally, I would like to thank the delegation of Japan for having prepared the draft presidential statement on this issue to be adopted at the end of the meeting.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement to be made later by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Abe for the report that he introduced (S/2005/69) on the question of small arms, which goes right to the heart of a number of conflicts on the Security Council's agenda.

In keeping with your recommendation, Sir, I will keep my statement brief. I will distribute the full text of the statement that I had been planning to make, which includes further details of our position.

Ever since the United Nations Programme of Action to combat the illicit trade in small arms was launched, France has participated actively in its implementation. Moreover, my country is considering new initiatives in which the international community could participate to combat the illicit trade in small arms more effectively.

With regard to implementing the Programme of Action, France has sought to promote the activities of regional organizations to which we belong and to develop cooperation with other regional entities. We have promoted the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and of the European Union. On the African continent, we have financially supported the implementation of the moratorium of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) since 1999. We have also provided long-standing support to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, at Lomé, and we shall continue that effort. Finally, in multilateral forums, France hopes that the negotiations begun in New York in February 2004 will lead to a legally binding instrument that will eventually permit the international harmonization of national and regional norms in this area.

In addition to the initiatives already undertaken, we must now determine what proposals might be able to command a consensus. We believe it is on the basis of practical needs, such as those arising in the regional dimension of combating the illicit trade in small arms, that such proposals will be found.

France's approach to this subject within the European Union has two aspects. First, we must respond to the requests of Eastern European and Central Asian countries aimed at reducing their excess stocks of small arms and light weapons and ammunition resulting from the cold war. Those stocks could indeed be diverted and could help to fuel illicit trafficking, particularly to non-State actors in Africa.

Secondly, we need to support the efforts of African regional organizations in implementing instruments such as the ECOWAS moratorium. Particular attention should also be devoted to transborder problems and, in that context, to combating the illicit aerial transport of small arms and light weapons. That is a favourite method of bypassing embargoes and a source of particular concern for the Security Council. We must also think about how to supplement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities with a view to improving their effectiveness, and how United Nations peacekeeping operations could contribute to tracing small arms and light weapons.

At the national level, we are also thinking about the impact of the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons on human development and about ways in which to include those issues in bilateral cooperation instruments.

Those are the points I wanted to make. France is now trying to make progress in those areas with our European Union partners. We hope that our thoughts will be more widely echoed within the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Benin.

I, too, would like to thank Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his excellent introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on small arms.

The harmful effects of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons are increasingly obvious. Unquestionably, such weapons help to increase the number of crises. They fuel and prolong armed conflicts. They also support transborder organized crime, mercenarism and many other negative factors that gravely jeopardize basic human rights and hinder the development efforts of the affected countries.

Africa in general and West Africa in particular are affected. Two years ago, at the first Biennial Meeting of States to review the implementation of the Programme of Action to Combat the Illicit Trade in Small Arms, the number of illicit small arms circulating in West Africa was cited at 8 million. Today, ECOWAS estimates that number to be 15 million.

However, that is not because of a lack of awareness of the gravity of the phenomenon and its

repercussions on the stability of the subregion. The dizzying increase in the number of illicit small arms in circulation has taken place despite the ECOWAS Moratorium on small arms and light weapons. Quite rightly, ECOWAS member States have decided to transform the Moratorium into a binding convention to make the mechanism more effective. ECOWAS intends to complete the process of adopting the convention by December 2005 at the latest. Its management will be entrusted to a particularly influential organ of ECOWAS, the Mediation and Security Council in particular, which will lend its full authority to the new mechanism.

Here, I should also mention the decision of the ECOWAS countries to replace the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), established by the United Nations Development Programme in 1999 to support the moratorium, with a new regional surveillance programme. It is clear that the real impact of PCASED on the development of the situation has remained marginal owing to a lack of resources.

The new programme adopted by ECOWAS in October 2004, named the ECOWAS Small Arms Project (ECOSAP), and the creation of a Small Arms Unit in the Community's Executive Secretariat, are important elements that reflect a renewed commitment to combating the illicit circulation of small arms in West Africa. ECOSAP is designed to promote, by strengthening them, capacities to monitor the illicit circulation of small arms across the borders of member States. In that regard, the experience of ECOWAS is also a specific example of mobilization to contain that phenomenon. We take this opportunity to make a strong appeal for greater responsibility on the part of countries that supply small arms so that they can help stem the phenomenon of the proliferation of such weapons.

The international community's efforts to stabilize West Africa should devote particular attention to controlling the arms flows that converge there. We welcome the notable progress made in the international community's strategy. An essential pillar of that strategy is the integrated regional approach adopted by the United Nations in the area of promoting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, taking into account military, security, political, economic and social aspects. That approach should be supported by sufficient resources to maximize its impact. Likewise, we fully suppor recommended firmness to ensure compliance wit embargoes adopted by the Security Council. In regard, we support the implementation of Secretary-General's recommendation aimed identifying violators and adopting sanctions ag them.

In addition to those measures, which see reduce supply, particular attention should be devot promoting a culture of non-violence both an political actors and in the educational systems o affected countries, because that would help significantly reduce the demand for small arms.

We are convinced that the combined efforts o international community and the joint activities o countries of the region will make it possible to stab permanently the affected countries and to preven destabilization of other countries that have thu succeeded in preserving peace and security within borders.

We thank the delegation of Japan for the presidential statement that it has kindly submitted.

I now resume my functions as President o Council.

In order to optimize the use of our time an allow as many delegations as possible to take the f I will not invite speakers to take a seat at the table then resume their seat at the side of the Chamber time a speaker takes the floor, the Conference Of will seat the next speaker on the list at the table.

I now give the floor to the representative of S Africa.

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): My deleg would like to congratulate you on your assumptio the presidency of the Security Council for the mon February and to express our appreciation to you convening this very important open debate on the i of small arms and light weapons. My delegatio particularly pleased by the continued involvemen the Security Council in this issue.

South Africa also wishes to thank the Secre General for his report S/2005/69 on the state of implementation of the 12 recommendations he mad September 2002. Of particular importance to delegation are those recommendations that pertai the implementation of the United Nations Progra

of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and how the Security Council contributes to this implementation process.

Three years after the adoption of the Programme of Action in 2001, it is sobering to note that large numbers of illicit small arms and light weapons continue to circulate in Africa, fuelling conflicts and in most cases with peacekeepers unable to ascertain the origin of these weapons.

The Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which will be held this coming July, will, in our view, present a last opportunity before the 2006 Review Conference to reflect on the degree to which Member States have implemented undertakings in the Programme of Action. My delegation is of the view that this Biennial Meeting should provide an opportunity for Member States to identify difficulties in the implementation and areas where assistance is needed, particularly at the national and regional levels. South Africa continues to believe that the implementation of the Programme of Action at the respective national levels is imperative if we are to succeed in our combined efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate this scourge in all its aspects at the regional and global levels.

The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 58/241, mandating an open-ended working group to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace small arms and light weapons, presented an opportune moment for the international community to effectively deal with this issue. South Africa remains convinced that an effective international instrument would enhance the ability of States to uncover lines of illicit supply and identify traffickers and points of diversion from licit to illicit spheres.

South Africa is pleased to note from the Secretary-General's report that progress is being made on the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons, as mentioned under Recommendation 1. However, the significant challenge that remains is that of obtaining consensus on the establishment of an international mechanism with the capacity to process and manage the tracing of these illicit arms in a timely and efficient manner.

It is through such collective efforts on the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons — as well as the envisaged subsequent initiatives outlined in General Assembly resolution 59/86 to enhance international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in these weapons — that we will be able to put in place the framework to halt the scourge of the illicit proliferation of small arms that the Secretary-General has outlined in his Recommendation 4. My delegation is therefore pleased that that resolution requests the Secretary-General to hold broad-based consultations on the issue of brokering, with a view to establishing a group of governmental experts on this issue not later than 2007.

South Africa's National Conventional Arms Control Act, which was implemented on 1 May 2003, represents the cornerstone of my country's conventional arms control legislation and related policies. This Act contains specific guiding principles and criteria to be considered when arms transfer applications are assessed. These provisions include the principle of adherence to international law, norms and practices and the international obligations and commitments of the Republic, including the United Nations Security Council arms embargoes. This prerequisite had already been included in our draft bill even prior to the inclusion of Recommendation 5, relating to national legislation, in the aforementioned report of the Secretary-General of September 2002 (*S/2002/1053*).

Similarly, the Act stipulates that arms export applications require the provision of authenticated end-user certificates, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's Recommendation 9.

Through its extensive involvement in peacekeeping operations in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa has experienced the value of effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) activities. It has recognized that provisions relating to DDR are an essential part of the mandates of peacekeeping operations, as the Secretary-General has mentioned in his Recommendation 7. We believe that the Secretary-General's Recommendation 8, that strengthened financing of DDR programmes needs to be secured, is vital in guaranteeing that the entire peace process is a success.

Effective DDR programmes should include specific measures for the collection and disposal of illicit and surplus small arms and light weapons. We urge the international community and the donors to

complement such DDR programmes in order to assist countries emerging from conflict in the implementation of these programmes.

One of the pillars in the implementation of the Programme of Action is the regional approach. The South African Government has since identified the importance of this approach in addressing the problem of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is a programme of the African Union, includes a Peace and Security Initiative that maps out the promotion in our continent of long-term conditions for development and security. In this context, we collectively aim to build our continent's capacity to manage these conflicts by strengthening our regional and subregional institutions to deal with conflict-prevention, as well as by combating illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I wish to note the Secretary-General's observation that the Programme of Action has emerged as a key issue on the agenda of both the General Assembly and the Security Council. South Africa continues to view the General Assembly as the organ with the primary responsibility to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action, to undertake its review and to launch initiatives such those on marking, record-keeping and tracing, as well as on illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons within the framework of the Programme of Action. However, it is also my delegation's belief that the Security Council should continue its involvement in this issue. Accordingly, we trust that the Council will remain seized of this matter and continue with the practice of having open debates on this important issue.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Luxembourg.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Three and a half years after the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the European Union welcomes today's opportunity to address, under your presidency, Sir, the subject of the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. The number of illicit small arms and light weapons in circulation, as well as the number of the victims of those weapons, remain unacceptably high.

The European Union also welcomes the opportunity to discuss the Secretary-General's most recent report on the initiatives undertaken to implement his recommendations concerning the ways in which the Security Council can contribute to the reduction of the illicit trade in small arms.

The European Union supports the Secretary-General's appeal to develop long-term strategies to halt the scourge of the illicit proliferation of small arms. The 2001 Programme of Action is one such strategy, and the European Union is actively working towards its implementation at the national, regional and global levels. The European Union underlines the importance of establishing a group of governmental experts soon after the 2006 Programme of Action Review Conference, in order to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.

The European Union welcomes the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which recognizes the explicit need for States to accelerate and conclude negotiations on legally binding agreements on the marking, tracing, brokering and transfer of small arms, as well as to ensure transparency in the submission, on a yearly basis, of complete reports on all the elements of the Register of Conventional Arms.

The European Union has been a strong supporter of the Open-ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. A great deal of progress has been made since the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in 2002 and since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 58/241.

The second session of the Open-ended Working Group was held two weeks ago in New York. The European Union and other States stated and confirmed their priorities with respect to the various issues — the

nature of the instrument, its scope and definition, the marking and tracing of small arms and ammunition, record-keeping and international cooperation. The European Union notes the progress made during those negotiations, although it deplores the fact that the participating States remain divided on the two major issues — the nature of the instrument and the inclusion of ammunition. Additional efforts are needed in that context.

The European Union recalls that it is working towards the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the identification and tracing of small arms and light weapons to supplement the United Nations Firearms Protocol. The European Union also stresses the need for the inclusion of provisions relating to ammunition. Indeed, illicit small arms depend on a steady supply of ammunition to continue wreaking havoc. If we can stem the flow of ammunition, we can make those weapons fall silent.

The European Union believes that the Security Council has an important role to play in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons and related ammunition. Peacekeeping missions and sanctions committees mandated by the Security Council should, as a matter of principle, be empowered to initiate tracing requests for illicit weapons and ammunition found in the course of their operations or collected in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

The European Union believes also that Interpol has an important part to play in the implementation of the future instrument on the identification and tracing of small arms and light weapons. The European Union calls for the conclusion of a cooperative agreement between the United Nations and Interpol addressing relevant legal and technical issues, with a view to enabling Interpol to fulfil that mandate.

Violations of Security Council arms embargoes contribute greatly to the spread of destruction and suffering in conflict areas and must be strongly condemned. The EU therefore supports the Secretary-General's recommendations on improved enforcement of Security Council sanctions, especially arms embargoes.

The European Union welcomes the recommendation made by Mr. Annan to pursue more vigorously and expeditiously the use of arms embargoes to countries or regions threatened by, engaged in or emerging from armed conflict, and to promote their effective implementation. Furthermore, the European Union supports the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Council be encouraged to establish monitoring mechanisms that would enable the detection of deliberate violations by Member States of United Nations arms embargoes.

All EU Member States are bound by the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, which is a very comprehensive international arms export regime. It is aimed at improving the exchange of information among Member States and at enhancing mutual understanding of their export-control policies, including provisions on requirements relating to thoroughly checked end-user certificates, appropriate documentation or some form of official authorization issued by the country of final destination.

The EU fully supports Mr. Annan's recommendation in that area. The Code of Conduct has allowed our member States to set high common standards for the management of conventional arms transfers, and it is currently being renewed to enhance its effectiveness.

The European Union welcomes the efforts being made to build regional support for better control over small arms transfers. It welcomes also the important work being done in various forums to discuss and improve common standards for arms transfers at the national, regional and global levels. Such standards must be based on existing responsibilities under the relevant provisions of international law.

We support the efforts made by the Secretariat to encourage Member States to participate in the Register of Conventional Arms. The European Union reiterates its call on all States to submit timely returns of imports and exports to the Register, including information on military holdings and on procurement related to national production.

The European Union welcomes the emphasis on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes in post-conflict situations in the Secretary-General's report on small arms, and we note the increased focus by the Council on this issue. It agrees also that specific measures are needed for the collection and disposal of illicit or surplus small arms and light weapons in the context of the mandates of peacekeeping operations.

The European Union's Action Plan on Africa outlines the support that the European Security and Defence Policy can offer African peacekeeping capabilities, including providing relevant African organizations with "on call" teams able to plan and implement actions in the area of DDR and security sector reform. The EU is willing also to train military personnel and civilians to participate in DDR programmes, including aspects specific to the subject of child soldiers.

The European Union is determined to help other partners, with the common goal of moving matters forward. Through its joint action on combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms, the EU provides financial and technical assistance to countries, groups of countries and international and non-governmental organizations that request such support. Since 1999, through that joint action, we have taken 14 such actions in Eastern Europe, in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Asia and in Africa. The total sum committed so far is almost 13 million euros.

Among the priorities set by the Council, specific attention has been given to the destruction of existing stockpiles of small arms and to support for regional moratoriums in Africa. In that context, the European Council decided, on 2 December 2004, to give its fullest support to the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States to strengthen its moratorium and to replace it with a mandatory convention. In addition, 48.7 million euros were committed in 2003 alone, from the European Development Fund, to support small arms and light weapons projects in Africa. Through that fund, the EU is financing several programmes aimed at the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants into society and others geared to the collection and destruction of weapons.

In addition, the member States of the European Union contribute individually to many assistance projects and programmes aimed at controlling the illicit trading and use of small arms and light weapons, particularly in African countries.

While we have noted recent positive developments, may I conclude by calling for continued relentless efforts on the part of the international community as a whole to make the best possible use of existing and future instruments in order to put an end to the uncontrolled accumulation of illicit small arms and light weapons, so as to help prevent senseless violence in future.

For its part, the European Union will continue to work towards that goal by relying on international cooperation, financial and technical assistance programmes and effective arms control.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for holding this open debate on the question of small arms. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his substantive report (S/2005/69) on this issue, and to support the recommendations contained therein.

In our view, the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms, which was adopted in 2001, is the most comprehensive framework to deal with the illicit trade in small arms. The Programme is a significant, but only the first, big step towards achieving the goal of controlling that scourge. We hope that the follow-up process will find ways to strengthen and further develop the measures contained in the Programme.

Ukraine shares the view that efforts to combat the illicit trade in, and proliferation of, small arms and light weapons are greatly hampered by inadequate national, regional and international capacity to trace the sources and supply lines of illicit arms. While recognizing the vital importance of international cooperation, we believe that States bear the primary responsibility to solve the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. States should make their best effort to ensure that the production, export, import, stockpiling, marking and transfer of small arms and light weapons, as well as record-keeping, are carried out in strict adherence to international and national laws and regulations.

We are of the view that each element in the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons — marking, record-keeping and international cooperation — should remain a national prerogative. Any arrangement to be established or further strengthened by a new international instrument on tracing should not duplicate, complicate or diminish the effectiveness of existing mechanisms and arrangements, including customs cooperation and mutual legal assistance.

Ukraine fully supports the view that any new instrument should conform to the existing commitments of States under the relevant bilateral, regional and international arrangements and should fully reflect national security interests. Above all, we believe that a future instrument should be viable, effective and workable, so that it can enjoy the broadest possible support from the international community.

It is evident that promoting long-term conditions for development and security is impossible without the resolution of ongoing conflicts and the taking of adequate measures aimed at ensuring stability in post-conflict situations. The Council has made considerable progress in that regard. However, we still have some distance to cover in the areas of detailed monitoring and working with businesses, financial institutions and other actors on the implementation of arms embargoes.

The series of innovative measures taken by the Security Council to enhance compliance with arms embargoes, including by establishing independent panels of experts and monitoring mechanisms, has resulted in some positive outcomes. The problem nevertheless persists. We fully support the Council's consideration of action against States, entities and individuals that deliberately violate United Nations arms embargoes.

It is also important to review the lessons learned, in order to ensure the effectiveness of further measures that could be taken by the Security Council. It will be useful to focus on the financial sources used to purchase illegal weapons and to define the role that international organizations, business and financial institutions and other actors at the regional and local levels can play in implementing arms embargoes.

Ukraine would also like to propose some additional elements concerning illicit small arms and light weapons for further exploration as the issue is discussed: placing restrictions on the supply of ammunition to areas of instability; and destroying excessive old stockpiles of small arms and light weapons. Ukraine believes that the effective destruction of excessive old stockpiles of small arms and light weapons in affected countries may prove to be an important development.

In our view, the successful implementation of NATO's Partnership for Peace trust fund project in my country, which aims to destroy 1.5 million small arms and light weapons and 133,000 tons of ammunition, as well as future destruction programmes to be carried out in Ukraine under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, will make a considerable contribution to international efforts in this area.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Ukraine conducts a responsible policy in the field of arms control. Ukrainian legislation envisages strict measures to prevent the illegal manufacture, possession and trafficking of all types of armaments, including small arms and light weapons. A national export-control system provides for effective procedures for licensing imports and exports. Measures have also been taken to improve national legislation in this field. One of the latest steps was the adoption by the Government of Ukraine of a set of practical measures to implement the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action and the 2000 OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Let me assure the Council that Ukraine will continue to play an active part in international efforts to combat the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and to rein in their uncontrolled proliferation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Laurin (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The Security Council has an important role to play in facilitating and enforcing international efforts to control the pervasive impact of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Canada is encouraged by the progress made in that regard, particularly the establishment of mechanisms to assess the implementation of sanctions regimes and the strengthening of arms embargoes. Nevertheless, this issue deserves the Council's sustained attention, given that small arms and light weapons continue to threaten international peace and security.

This debate provides an invaluable opportunity to recognize the progress that has been made, to consider lessons learned and, most important, to renew efforts to focus on the many aspects of the small arms issue. The Secretary-General's report (S/2005/69) will be useful in guiding our future efforts, especially given its recommendations on how the Council could usefully contribute to combating the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects.

Compliance with arms embargoes and sanctions regimes is central to international peace and security. We urge the Council to continue aggressive implementation and monitoring of these regimes, and welcome its engagement with regional initiatives, such as the Nairobi Declaration and the Economic Community of West African States moratorium.

Canada encourages the Council to utilize such tools as reports and recommendations from monitoring groups and expert panels to ensure greater transparency and cooperation with sanctions regimes. We urge the Council to support the recommendations made by high-level and monitoring groups on the need to address gaps in legislation on brokering and to strengthen transfer controls. The Council must call on Member States to exercise the highest degree of responsibility in the transfer of small arms. An effective global response to small arms must address control of transfers between States as well as transfers to non-State actors.

The establishment of an international instrument on the identification and tracing of small arms and light weapons would also help the Council in its efforts to enforce arms embargoes and to control the illicit trade in order to ensure the protection of civilians. Canada is committed to seeing a successful conclusion of these negotiations and we welcome the High-level Panel's recommendation of a legally binding instrument.

We urge the Council to consider its role in improving international cooperation with respect to tracing small arms in conflict and post-conflict settings. Peacekeeping operations and sanctions committees should receive the appropriate mandates to initiate traces that will assist States to identify those who knowingly violate arms embargoes. Furthermore, we encourage the Council to consider increased cooperation with the International Criminal Police Organization in order to improve identification of diversion points in the trade of small arms.

(*spoke in English*)

Small arms proliferation must be considered as part of the broader context of international peace and human security, including initiatives to strengthen peacebuilding and conflict-prevention efforts. Those weapons continue to interfere with conflict prevention measures, undermine the provision of humanitarian assistance, exacerbate armed conflict and insecurity, threaten security in refugee camps, and frustrate the sustainability of peace processes and peacebuilding efforts.

Increased interaction between the Council and the General Assembly would allow for creative approaches to the small arms issue from a broader peacebuilding and human security perspective. Canada supports further cooperation between the two organs to develop and implement immediate and long-term strategies. Greater results will be achieved through more decisive and substantive action by both bodies.

The Security Council, through such resolutions as 1521 (2003) on Liberia and 1533 (2004) on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has recognized and made efforts to address the link between the illicit trade in small arms and the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources. Canada urges the Security Council to take stronger measures — including the enforcement and monitoring of targeted sanctions — to break the cycle between arms shipments though illicit channels and the exploitation of natural resources.

Canada welcomes progress made to date on the inclusion of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) planning in integrated peacekeeping missions, as well as the development of policies, guidelines and procedures for the planning and implementation of DDR in a peacekeeping context. We urge the Council to adopt comprehensive and regional approaches to DDR, to include those approaches in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, to provide financing for DDR under the budget for peacekeeping operations, and to give due consideration to reintegration to ensure sustainable socio-economic development.

We call for a continued emphasis on the parallel implementation of community development and DDR programmes, taking into account all members of the community — men, women, boys and girls — and to include strategies for children affected by armed conflict. In line with our obligations under resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, Canada urgently calls for the full and equal participation of women in the design and implementation of all DDR programmes and activities, as actions and decisions on DDR have a direct and specific impact on the lives of women and on the possibilities of achieving sustainable peace.

It is Canada's view that the international community has fallen short on commitments to make people and their communities safer from armed violence. This is a devastating situation with real and lingering impact that continues to undermine international efforts to establish peaceful and secure environments where humanitarian and development initiatives can take root and yield results. Our collective responsibility is to take meaningful action that will result in improved and safer lives for girls, boys, men and women in all regions of the world. Now is the time for action. The next 18 months hold important opportunities for concerted action against the easy availability and misuse of small arms. The July 2005 Biennial Meeting of States and the 2006 review conference on the United Nations Programme of Action provide platforms to evaluate our success and, more importantly, to determine the way forward.

It is imperative to ensure that a more comprehensive approach to the small arms issue be pursued at the 2005 and 2006 meetings. Aspects of the issue that were neglected in the 2001 Programme of Action must receive adequate attention, including those related to the human and humanitarian impact of small arms.

The challenge now for the Council and Member States, alongside their partners in international organizations and civil society, is to replace words with action and to deliver on this urgent agenda. The problem is complex, but the solution is not beyond our reach. We have the means to take constructive action to achieve our common goals. We should do so now.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland would like to thank Benin for convening this open debate of the Security Council on small arms and light weapons.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects states that Governments bear the primary responsibility to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. However, in order to become fully effective, the efforts of Governments should be supported and complemented by multilateral organizations, and the Security Council has thus a clear role to play.

In his report of 20 September 2002, the Secretary-General included a set of recommendations on ways and means whereby the Security Council could contribute to dealing with the question of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in situations under its consideration. Those recommendations are still valid. The most recent report of the Secretary-General on the initiatives undertaken to implement those recommendations shows that important progress has been made in several key areas.

I would like to take this opportunity to focus on a few aspects where Switzerland sees a concrete role for the Security Council.

First, it is our view that the Security Council should include in all peacekeeping mandates the requirement to gather information, including on weapons markings, on all small arms and light weapons that are collected or seized in the context of those missions, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. The Council should also enable peacekeeping operations to initiate tracing requests in relation to those weapons. To accomplish these additional tasks within the framework of peacekeeping operations and DDR programmes, the necessary resources have to be included in the regular peacekeeping budget.

Secondly, compliance with arms embargoes and sanctions regimes is crucial. Switzerland is of the view that the enforcement of arms embargoes could be greatly improved by providing peacekeeping operations and sanctions committees with a mandate to initiate tracing requests with regard to illicit weapons found in the course of their investigations. This could contribute to identifying networks that illicitly supply weapons and materiel under embargo.

In this context, two measures should be encouraged. First, it would be good to have training for United Nations staff deployed to countries under arms embargoes on the monitoring of such embargoes and on related aspects, such as the collection of baseline data on and the identification of seized weapons. The second recommendation is that there should be increased cooperation between the United Nations and relevant international organizations, such as the World Customs Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Thirdly, Switzerland is convinced that close cooperation between the United Nations and Interpol is

of crucial importance for the efficient identification and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons. Ties with Interpol could be strengthened by assigning a law enforcement component to peacekeeping operations and sanction committees that have the competence to interact with Interpol, including their access to all Interpol databases relevant to the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, Switzerland calls for the conclusion of a cooperative agreement between the Security Council and Interpol that could serve as a framework for cooperation in the field of tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. That cooperation agreement could be complemented by a protocol covering the technical details on a case-by-case basis. The existing Memorandum of Understanding between Interpol and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo on cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice might serve as an example for that purpose. We are of the view that the presidential statement to be adopted at the end of today's debate would gain from mentioning the need for increased cooperation with Interpol in tracing small arms and light weapons.

Fourthly, it has been clearly established that the illicit exploitation of natural resources constitutes one of the privileged sources of financing fuelling the illicit trade in small arms. We are starting to profit from accrued experience in the field of controlling the illicit exploitation of natural resources, in particular through the Kimberley process. Switzerland suggests formalizing the panels of experts so that they can contribute more substantially to the work of the Council and thus allow it to identify minimum norms and standards that would guide the exploitation of natural resources in conflict zones.

We invite the Security Council to ask the Secretary-General for a specific report on the exploitation of illicit natural resources in conflict situations, including its links with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, we think that a more integrated approach to the question of small arms and light weapons would benefit from solid research and support in civil society. In this context, we recall the studies made by the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey, and we inform Security Council members that its annual publication this year will be devoted precisely to the role of small arms and light weapons in current conflicts.

In closing, Sir, let me recall — as a member of the Human Security Network — the urgent need to take concerted action to combat the devastating humanitarian effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of these arms remain a major cause of human suffering around the world, and they represent a serious threat to human security. Only if the Security Council, Member States and civil society join in their efforts will we reach our goal of making each and every person and their respective communities safer.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Berruga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, my delegation would like to thank you for convening this public meeting, and we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report to the Council on the ways it could help resolve the matter of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, for introducing the report to us.

Since 1999, in parallel with the preparatory process for the Conference to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in July 2001, the Security Council has been engaged in taking up the issue of proliferation of such arms, particularly in the context of conflict situations that are on its agenda.

The illicit manufacture of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a multidimensional problem. It encourages organized crime; it promotes a culture of violence; it prolongs and worsens conflicts that take an unacceptable number of civilian victims, primarily women and children. Thus a comprehensive strategy is needed to control and eradicate that situation.

It is necessary to join efforts in combating the illicit trafficking in and production of small arms and light weapons, and the producing and exporting countries must recognize that they have a primary responsibility. Mexico participates in all regional and international efforts to eliminate the illicit trade in and manufacture of small arms and light weapons. Accordingly, my country is party to the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials, adopted by the Organization

of American States in 1997. Mexico is also party to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

In reviewing the progress made in implementing the 12 recommendations mentioned in the presidential statement of October 2002 (*S/PRST/2002/30*), the Secretary-General describes various activities undertaken in this area. He highlights the fact that the Working Group has now started negotiating an instrument to enable States to trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable way. During the Working Group's recent second session the Mexican delegation reiterated its belief that a legally binding instrument is needed, not simply to ensure that it is effective as we move towards our goal, but also because that would set a positive precedent for later negotiations on other issues relating to small arms and light weapons in the United Nations.

The Secretary-General also refers to the need to redouble efforts to apply other recommendations, such as increasing interaction in this area between the Security Council and the General Assembly. We believe such interaction to be essential in taking a comprehensive approach to dealing with this phenomenon.

Mexico believes that we should focus more closely on the issue of brokers. They are referred to in passing in the Programme of Action, but their activities must be subject to strict controls. The most recent estimates show that brokers play a critical role in the trade in small arms and light weapons. The lack of attention paid to illegal actions by such individuals derives to a large extent from gaps in national and international regulation.

My country therefore believes that one fundamental element in controlling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons would be to negotiate a legal instrument regulating the transfer of such arms. The main manufacturers and exporters must be subject to precise rules that would prevent the transfer of small arms and light weapons that could be diverted onto the illegal track or that could fall into the hands of criminal gangs and those who violate international law. Such provisions would have to be applied with no negative impact on lawful transfers that enable countries to exercise their legitimate right to self-defence, as set out in Article 51 of the Charter.

One of the several measures that we consider important is ensuring that all lawful arms transfers to be accompanied by end-users certificates, in accordance with the Secretary-General's recommendation 9.

Another matter of particular importance for my country is the need to regulate the possession by civilians of small arms and light weapons. Mexico expressed this concern during the 2001 United Nations Conference on the illicit trade in small arms. My country believes that a discussion of this matter at the international level would enable States to share their experiences in effectively controlling civilian ownership of weapons.

Mexico attaches great importance to the work of the Security Council on this matter. We believe that it should join with other United Nations organs and relevant regional, subregional and international bodies in working to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

It is clear from the report of the Secretary-General that the international community, in particular the Security Council, has taken steps that demonstrate its commitment to tackle this problem. But we still need new instruments and strategies to enable us effectively and completely to eradicate the illicit manufacture of and traffic in small arms and light weapons. We hope that this meeting will prompt the undertaking of commitments that have been postponed for too long.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is representative of Peru, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open Security Council debate to take up once again an issue of crucial importance for the international community: the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

Small arms and light weapons are now central to all civil wars and armed violence throughout the world. They have very particular characteristics: they are small; they do not weigh much; they do not cost much. That makes them very easy to transport and to use: with minimum training, even a child can use them — and, indeed, children do use them. Furthermore, these weapons are easy to hide, and it is very difficult to monitor the trade in them or trace them to their final

destination. Many of them are exported legally, but then enter the illicit market, and today they are the main source of income for armed gangs and other criminals, including mercenaries and terrorist groups.

The illicit traffic in such arms is becoming an ever greater threat to international security in this century. In the past 15 years, small arms have been used in more than 90 per cent of civil conflicts, and they are responsible for most weapons-related deaths that take place throughout the world — more than half a million every year.

Despite the fact that, since the Second World War, small arms and light weapons have proved far more lethal than heavy weapons and weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations, since its establishment, has paradoxically focused on developing international arms control regimes for nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. That is, of course, extremely important. But it is really a paradox that we do not yet have an international treaty to regulate the arms that have caused most weapons-related deaths since the Second World War, and that continue to kill.

Although we have made progress on the basis of the Programme of Action adopted in 2001, the fact that it is not legally binding at the international level means that we are still a long way from genuine, effective solutions, as there are no mechanisms for verification or for punishing non-compliance.

That is why it is encouraging now to see the Security Council's growing interest in this problem, which affects human security in every continent. We believe that, in order to combat the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, the Security Council should support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2005/69). Last year, when speaking on this same issue at the 4896th meeting, I put forward a detailed list of actions that needed to be taken. Today, I shall confine myself to reiterating two that I consider to be the most important.

First, the Security Council must establish concrete mechanisms to make States comply with arms embargoes. Provision should be made for enforcement measures against Member States that violate such embargoes, with monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance. An effective tracking system would enable us to combat the improper use of small arms from the moment of their manufacture until they reach the end-user. That would make it possible to prosecute individuals and to hold Governments accountable for illegal sales and for violations of United Nations embargoes.

Secondly, the Security Council must include in peacekeeping mandates provisions relating to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. The focus should be on collecting and destroying surplus small arms and light weapons so as to prevent the illicit traffic in arms that could cause fresh conflict and violence unrelated to the conflict. Such actions must be closely related to a necessary increase in financial resources for disarmament programmes in the context of peacekeeping operations.

My country participates in all ongoing initiatives to prevent and combat illicit army trafficking. We submitted our national report pursuant to the 2001 Programme of Action. We also took part in drafting the Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also participated in the most recent Biennial Meeting on the Programme of Action, which took place here in New York. We supported — and will continue to support — every initiative that can enable us to move ahead on this issue.

The best thing that the Security Council could do now would be to lend its full support to the Working Group that is negotiating an international legal instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, small arms and light weapons. We hope that the Working Group, which has just concluded its second session, will complete its work by July 2005.

Although it is true that a legal instrument alone will not guarantee an end to the multimillion-dollar business represented by the numerous traffickers of illicit small arms and light weapons, such an instrument would undoubtedly be major progress, a point of departure, that would enable us to improve a situation that is clearly a new threat to international peace and security in this century. For Peru, an instrument that helps to identify and trace the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons should be legally binding and should cover ammunition and explosives, which are part of this category of weapons.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We should like to congratulate you, Sir, and your friendly country, Benin, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We congratulate you also on your initiative to hold this debate on an issue that affects the present and future of our African continent and of its peoples, thousands of whom fall victim to wars and conflicts that are exacerbated by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2005/69), which follows up on the recommendations in his 2002 report on small arms and light weapons (*S/2002/1053*).

The General Assembly has made progress in considering and developing the conceptual framework of its approach to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by adopting a number of resolutions and by establishing several expert groups. That has led to the holding of the United Nations conference on small arms, which in turn led to the establishment of the political framework governing the United Nations approach to small arms, reflected in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The delegation of Egypt looks forward to contributing to the implementation of international commitments under the Programme of Action by participating in the Second Biennial Meeting in 2005 and in the 2006 review conference.

The General Assembly's efforts to establish the conceptual framework by which the United Nations can address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons were accompanied by a great effort on the part of the Security Council to carry out its role and responsibility to confront the new challenges to peace and security by addressing the issues involved and developing the means necessary to do so. Hence, the Council's recognition of the gravity of the illicit trade in and spread of small arms and light weapons and of the humanitarian consequences in many regions, particularly Africa.

In that context, the Security Council's principal activities related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are based on two main elements. The first is reflected in the imposition of arms embargoes in conflict areas. The delegation of Egypt supports the Secretary-General's recommendation urging the Council to attach greater importance to the implementation of all provisions of resolutions that impose arms embargoes on regions or countries involved in or threatened by armed conflict, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter and in the light of the need to undertake measures against countries that violate those embargoes. We also support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the links between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the illicit exploitation of natural wealth and resources be considered and identified. In addition, we stress the importance of tracing the monetary transactions related to that area.

The second element of the Security Council's activities is related to the mandates of peacekeeping operations and the clear provisions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes through specific measures to collect and eliminate excess stocks of illicit small arms and light weapons within a comprehensive framework allowing for a factual assessment of peacekeeping operations once they have concluded. In that regard, we should like to highlight the importance of peacekeeping operations considering how the United Nations could promote efforts related to DDR programmes and providing special allocations from peacekeeping operations budget for that purpose. We also emphasize the importance of continuity in providing the financing needed to prevent the outbreak of conflict anew, including in providing the necessary financial means through the international financial institutions, relief organizations and humanitarian and development efforts in conflict areas.

In that connection, we support the Secretary-General's proposal to improve the exchange of information between the Security Council and the General Assembly by coordinating the strategies of both entities in the area of small arms and light weapons, taking into account the distinction between the mandate and role of the Security Council, on the one hand, and the more comprehensive role of the General Assembly, on the other. We believe that the establishment of a committee to oversee that effort as proposed by the Secretary-General, despite its great importance, should be preceded by the steps necessary to achieve the required transparency in the work of the Security Council committees on arms embargoes against particular regions.

As it plays its important role in the area of small arms and light weapons in carrying out its

responsibility to maintain international peace and security under Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council should also play a parallel role by enabling countries — particularly peoples under foreign occupation — to exercise their natural rights, individually or collectively, to self-determination.

Finally, we wish to reaffirm the importance of commitment by all parties in the international community to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, including an effective international instrument that would enable States to identify and trace small arms and light weapons and would guarantee the participation of influential countries in carrying out its provisions. That would also be an essential contribution to achieving and affirming the political commitment of the international community in dealing with this issue.

The President (*spoke in French*): As there are still a number of speakers inscribed on my list, and in view of the lateness of the hour, I propose, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3.15 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.